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Mr Leonard Crainford, well-known as a member of R.D.S. Executive, who is Secretary to the Council of the Festival, sends us this note on the

FESTIVAL OF BRITAIN 1951

LOCAL Authorities of every kind and all the National Voluntary and Professional Organizations have been invited by the Council of the Festival of Britain 1951 to share in Great Britain's Great Festival which will be held during the summer months of that year.

To co-ordinate, inspire and lead the religious activities of the country in connexion with the Festival there has been set up The Festival of Britain Advisory Committee of the Christian Churches, all-denominational, under the Chairmanship of Dr Alan Don, the Dean of Westminster. The Executive Secretary of the Committee is the Rev. W. L. Harland.

This committee has already approached the Religious Drama Society and asked them, among other things, to participate in special performances of a religious play in a London church and also to encourage the working groups of players of religious drama throughout the country to present productions of the highest quality possible wherever opportunity presents itself in the Festival summer of 1951.

Readers of *Christian Drama* can help. In many localities Festival of Britain Committees have been or are being set up. It is fitting that the churches should be represented on these committees, and where it is possible for religious drama to play a part in the proposed programme every effort should be made to see that it is not omitted.

Through other organizations to which they may belong, and through the churches of which they are members, readers can also help prepare for the spirit of the Festival to be fully realized and its aims carried out in appropriate ways.

Those readers who are members of or linked with an active producing group should, wherever possible, ensure that a religious play is part of the Festival programme.

The Festival of Britain is, for the first time in history, an attempt to put a whole nation "on show" as it lives, as it works, as it plays;—in fact a nation in action—a nation which has contributed much in the past, demonstrating how it can continue to contribute to civilization in the future. The Festival should be considered as an act of faith, a national re-assessment of those attributes of which we can be justly proud.

Professor Murray, President of Cheshunt College, Cambridge, honoured the R.D.S. Summer School 1949 by delivering a lecture upon the drama of man's redemption. He has most generously allowed us to print for those who were not able to be present, a resumé which he has made of the substance of the lecture.

THE DIVINE TRAGEDY

By A. Victor Murray

When Dante treated of the divine plan of salvation he called his poem "The Divine Comedy" because it had a happy ending. It began with Hell but ended in Heaven. I suggest that Dante was a great poet but an indifferent theologian, for the difference between tragedy and comedy lies not in the nature of the ending but in the quality of its theme. A happy ending may on occasion be utterly tragic, while a sad ending, like that in *Samson Agonistes,* may be completely satisfying.

For this reason I am suggesting that the Christian view of the life of man on this earth is a divine tragedy—"tragic" because it is a story of frustration and pain, but "divine" because that frustration and that pain are not avoided, nor ended, but redeemed. That is to say, they are continued but become the means of a greater good than if they were not present at all. Tragedy thus speaks closer to our condition than comedy. This by no means necessitates pessimism, for pessimism is a subjective condition of the beholder, it is his verdict on the situation, whereas tragedy inheres in the situation itself. But neither does it need a delayed optimism, the attitude that all will come right in the end no matter what be the sorrows and frustration of the situation. Optimism too is a verdict and optimism and pessimism represent a division that lies across that between tragedy and comedy.

The first factor to notice in tragedy is its sense of finality. There is no going back nor is there any escape. The climax has to come. In the revised *Beggar's Opera* Macheath has to hang and there is no playwright to step forward out of the wings and alter the plot to make a happy ending. And this finality is somewhat strangely acceptable to human life, something strangely purifying. The wages of sin is death, and none of us in our hearts would have it otherwise. For judgement too is final and desirable. In Winifred Holtby's story *How Dossy Saw God* the secret wrongdoer suddenly discovers that what he wants most of all is not forgiveness but judgement and indeed punishment, and it is only then that he finds peace. Things have got to work out to their consequences before anything can be

done about them. A situation has often to get worse before it can get better. That is why forgiveness is an ethical process and has nothing whatever to do with remission of a penalty. And by finality I do not mean simply that the past is past and that what's done can't be undone. It is rather that there is a process which has to be seen through to the end. The wheels that are set in motion have to run down. Tragedy therefore has in it the idea of a plot moving on to a climax, and not just of an event that has taken place. Tragedy has in it this sense of finality but not all finality is tragedy.

We come then to the second element in tragedy as we understand it and as Euripides and Shakespeare understood it, the sense that nothing like this need have happened at all; everything *could* have been so different. *Macbeth* is a tragedy not because it begins with a murder and ends with the slaughter of the murderer, but because the hero need not have been a murderer at all. There are good qualities in Macbeth, so good indeed that at the end along with satisfaction that crime has met its punishment there is also regret that so notable a soldier should have been so bad a villain. There is no tragedy in the death of a thoroughly bad man or of a despicable character. There must, we say, be redeeming features in order to make a situation truly tragic. Who cannot but be sorry for Othello, or regret the criminal indecision of Hamlet or the equally criminal credulity of Lear? For it is not always positive sin that produces tragedy—it is equally produced when all the factors that are necessary to control a situation are present but are not used, and so the situation gets out of hand and the wheels are set going and continue their fatal course to the end. Polonius, Ophelia, Laertes and then Hamlet himself, as well as the King and Queen have all to die as the price of Hamlet's habit of introspection. All this is quite unlike the early Greek tragedians, for the only inevitability there is in the working out of actions which themselves are by no means inevitable. It is a tragedy of freewill and not of necessity and so it speaks much more closely to our condition. There is something inherent in the nature of man rather than in Fate which makes these things possible.

When we ask ourselves what it is, we find that it is a certain dualism—not between good and evil but between the material and the spiritual. It is worth remembering that these two classifications are not parallel but across. There is a materialism which is good, and a spiritual quality which is bad. Mortification of the flesh can easily be used as a justification for unbridled self-indulgence in the spirit. There is a two-fold nature in man. We are of the earth and yet our citizenship is also in heaven. There is that within us which is temporal and there is that which is eternal and so there is a constant inner warfare which, however, can never be ended by victory. Victory for either side must be at the expense of the other, and therefore is incomplete and unhappy. For three score years and ten we are part of the world of time and sense and therefore our adjustments must be temporal and sensuous. These are not limiting conditions, as if man was somehow entirely spirit and was hemmed in at every side by prison walls: they are the characteristics of our mortal condition. But alongside this our

world and vastly overlapping it at the beginning and at the end is the eternal invisible world of which also we are part.

How can something be both timeless and yet part of a time sequence: spiritual and at the same time material? Yet this is the paradox of human life, this is the kind of people we are. These two factors have somehow to find their equilibrium, and tragedy consists in the wrong choices setting in motion centrifugal forces which make this equilibrium for ever impossible. These choices are made in the realm of the material world—in our relations to possessions, dignities, power, persons—but it is not a matter of choosing the temporal or the eternal. It is far more subtle than that, for it is only by the right use of the temporal that we become aware of the eternal. It is there all the time but it is revealed through the temporal world. Accordingly wrong choices not only lead to the abuse of the temporal world but also shut us out more and more from awareness of the spiritual world which lies all around us and to which also we properly belong. Let me again make clear that it is not the temporal *or* the eternal. It is the right or wrong use of the temporal that matters. To set the two up against one another as alternatives is to assume that man has the ability to discern this difference himself and to act as if it were possible for him to be a spiritual being and nothing else. In this there is a certain root of pride and the possibility of contempt for his fellows who do not follow this apparently ascetic road. The utter distinction between the temporal and the spiritual is a philosophical abstraction—it does not correspond in any way to experience. Nevertheless, while the wrong use of the temporal is the root of tragedy, the right use of it is not discoverable within the temporal itself. It is at the point where there is union between the temporal and the eternal that we find the discipline which enables us to choose aright in temporal matters.

Let us look at a common experience which will illustrate all these points. I mean the love of man and woman. Here you have a relationship between two persons, both of them separate objects of flesh and blood, certain in the course of nature to decay and die. The love between them is a physical thing and is concerned with sight, hearing and touch, and when there is nothing to see, hear or touch love is baulked of its object. But love is a relation also of the spirit. It may and indeed does begin in the physical senses but it goes far beyond them and indeed transforms them. It is a relation of spirit with spirit as well as of body with body. It seeks union with the beloved and yet the closer that sense of union the greater is the accompanying awareness of difference. The sense of oneness paradoxically heightens the sense of individuality. It is in a relationship of that kind, physical yet not all physical, spiritual yet not all spiritual, that we come nearest to understanding *both* the physical *and* the spiritual. We arrive at that balance of the two worlds in both of which we have to find our home. Yet there is pain in that very situation. The spirit does feel the temporal as a limitation. "Stay," says Goethe to the moment of ecstasy, "Stay, for thou art so fair." The spirit longs and faints for complete union without any difference at all. In *Coriolanus* it is said of Marcius "he wants nothing

of a god but eternity" and in the deepest and most blissful experiences of life the spirit cries out for eternity, with an urgency that can never be satisfied. Death indeed is welcome if it means an uninterrupted union with the beloved.

Yet note what happens to the contrast of flesh and spirit in the ecstasy of love if either prevails over the other. If it is the flesh that wins, the beloved becomes at once an object to be possessed rather than an equal partner in an experience. Harlotry may be a commercial enterprise, but it is also a habit of mind into which even good people can fall. To be obsessed with the physical sensations of touch and sight is to treat a woman as a thing rather than a person and that is a denial of all spiritual relationship. On the other hand to forget that the other person has a body and suffers hunger and fatigue and stands in need of food and shelter and comfort even while the so-called lover wallows in thoughts of spiritual union and mutual self-realization is again to use a person as a thing. People do not fall in love in order to be a whetstone on which the other person can sharpen his spiritual sensibility, any more than sinners are on the earth in order that saints may increase their sainthood by putting up with them! Persons as persons are all equally body and spirit and need to be treated as such. This necessary duality is seen all through life. The same thing which is a blessing when used with discretion becomes a bane when misused. The wine of the sacrament can also be a cause of shame and ruin. The corruption of the good is the worst and hell is not the opposite of heaven but a misbegotten form of heaven: it is the good gone wrong and so for ever unable to realize itself as goodness and yet perpetually desiring to reach that goal. That indeed is tragedy for it is finality and at the same time the beginning had promise of something quite other than the end. Love which is the truest relationship of all can lead to the deepest misery of all when it gets separated from its true purpose. Passion which catches men up to the seventh heaven is also the means of dragging them down to the lowest hell. Yet by being overconcerned to avoid hell we miss the chance of the highest heaven. As the author of *Ecce Homo* well said "No heart is pure that is not passionate. No virtue is safe that is not enthusiastic."

This union of the flesh and the spirit, the temporal and the eternal, suggests that immortality as formerly conceived was no true compensation for the frustrations of human life. The life to come was thought of as a second existence either following immediately on the present one or to be enjoyed after a period of waiting and purgation. The mission hymn "Where will you spend eternity?" suggested that the future life was, like the present one, a time sequence but in this case having a beginning without any end. This future life was to be a compensation for this one. There would be no crying, no pain, no sorrow, no parting, no night: there earth's judgements would be reversed, the poor would be rich, the slave would be free, the oppressed would have nothing more to fear, the weak would be strong, the diseased made whole. It would be the happy ending which would be the resolving of all tragedy. This, however, empties our present

life of any intrinsic significance: it is a preparation, that is all. It subordinates the temporal world to the eternal not by redeeming it but by eliminating it. But eternal life, if it has any value for us, must somehow be in existence now. It is not an additional time sequence, it is an absence of the time sequence, a life parallel with this one, going on at the same time. The *time* conception of immortality is an attempt to avoid tragedy and to give life a happy ending after some preconceived pattern of our own.

Tragedy therefore has a third aspect. It is not only finality, it is not only a sense that things might have been different, it is also something inherent in any situation in which the immortal and the mortal have to come to terms with one another. Where the spirit insists on freedom from the flesh and where the flesh ignores the spirit, there is tragedy or the possibility of it. And it is only resolved by the means which brought it into existence. It is resolved, not avoided nor compensated for, but resolved —that is to say it is still there but it is an integral part of our good.

> O wisest love that *flesh and blood*
> Which did in Adam fail
> Should strive afresh against their foe
> Should strive, and should prevail.

I began by saying that the *Divine Comedy* is a great poem but it is bad theology. It is rooted in medieval theory rather than in the Bible. The Biblical interpretation of life is that it is a tragedy and that it remains so in spite of the work of Christ. Indeed we can go further and say that it was the work of Christ that exhibited it as a tragedy—a tragedy of persons—not like the early Greek tragedy a tragedy of fate; a tragedy which could only be resolved by persons and which was indeed *intended by God* to be resolved by persons. When Omar cries out

> Ah, love, could thou and I with fate conspire
> To grasp this sorry scheme of things entire
> Would we not shatter it to bits and then
> Remould it nearer to the heart's desire?

we might well ask whence came the heart's desire for something else if the whole sorry scheme of things, including the heart, is ordained by fate? There is no tragedy in Omar's world and because there is no tragedy there is also no hope. Let us rather hear St Paul on this matter:

> The earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God; for the creation was subjected to vanity not of its own will but by reason of him who subjected it, in hope . . . For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain with us until now. And not only so but we ourselves also which have the first fruits of the spirit, groan within ourselves waiting for our adoption, i.e. the redemption of our body.

Now when we look at the whole plan of things outlined in the Bible in the history of one individual race we can see how all the characteristics of

tragedy are present in the history of Israel. This gang of disgruntled slaves leaves Egypt and after a long struggle establishes itself precariously in Palestine, leaving behind them the leader who had delivered them. The divisions among them made them an easy pray to their enemies and so finally they had to seek a unity of command against the Philistines and Saul became their king and leader. He prepares the way for the reign of David and Israel emerges as the chosen people of God. In the very next reign, however, corruption sets in. Solomon introduces forced labour, and there are murmurings, but they put up with him because of his publicity value. For his son, however, they have no such toleration and the kingdom splits in two after an existence of less than a hundred years. Fresh enemies arise, and the northern kingdom meets them first, but the people are living in the Victorian age of Jeroboam II and they ignore the warnings of Amos and Hosea. The northern kingdom is extinguished after five centuries of separate existence. Surely the southern kingdom will be warned by this example—but no. Violence and oppression and intrigue flourish, and despite the appeals of Jeremiah the corrupt nation of Israel goes down in ruin before Babylon. In the exile there is time for reflection. Many of the psalms date from that period. The second Isaiah in his brooding on events raised Hebrew religion to the highest heights it had ever known. But they return from exile, these lessons are forgotten, and despite the acid protests of the book of Ruth and the book of Jonah a bitter exclusive nationalism takes the place of the universal gospel of the second Isaiah. Centuries after, there is a glorious but secular rebellion under the Maccabees and a new kingdom is set up which in less than a hundred years goes down before the power of Rome. The whole story is one long record of futility and frustration.

Then came Jesus and the Gospel, and what happens? By a horrible twist of circumstances the people put to death the very person whom they were expecting. So far from loving the highest when they see it they crucify the Lord of Glory. However, God raises him from the dead, the spirits of the disciples are revived at Pentecost, and the whole thing starts again. Yet in less than twenty-five years Paul has to deplore the spirit of faction. Denominations have sprung up. Some are of Paul, some of Cephas, some of Apollos and some arrogate to themselves the exclusive use of the name of Christ. One wonders from within which of these four denominations did the apostolic succession emerge! Persecution brought them together, but in success they flew apart again and the dominant section itself became a persecuting body. It could all have been so different, and was apparently intended to be so different. But the history of religion like that of the world itself is one long story of frustration and tragedy. And so it continues unto this day.

Now no situation can be redeemed from outside. It can be altered or compensated for or neutralized. But it cannot be redeemed, i.e. made to be the source of its own recovery. It has to be done from within—and you have to identify yourself with a situation, and take upon yourself all its glory and its shame before you can do anything with it. And the uneasy

relations in human life between the eternal and the temporal cannot be brought into equilibrium by any power which lies outside this conflict. This is surely the significance of Christ for human life. "Tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin," he was one of us and so the whole human race is redeemed from inevitable frustration because of him. He overcame the world and therefore the world can be overcome. The Cross showed up the tragedy of man. It showed the inability of man to see the good and his deadly power to do evil. The Resurrection showed the power of God—it was God acting on his own just as the Cross was man acting on *his* own. At Pentecost God and man come together again to work together for the salvation of the race. These three are three acts of the one play and our redemption depends upon all of them.

The tragedy therefore remains. But we see now how it is resolved. For God himself is in it. Not only the world of spirit but also the temporal world of things and people is *his* world. He suffers with it. The tragedy in it is at the heart of God as well as of man. Indeed it is more present to him than to us. But because he is in it it is redeemed even while it remains what it is. And as I have said before, it is redeemed—not avoided, not neutralized, not compensated, but redeemed.

At the end of a long day's work the Editorial Secretary of S.P.C.K. joined a 'bus load of enthusiasts and went to Brighton to see the first night of T. S. Eliot's THE COCKTAIL PARTY, *produced by E. Martin Browne, prior to its immensely successful presentation in New York. In a letter to the Editor, Mr Davey reviews the play.*

THE COCKTAIL PARTY

THIS is a specific Christian play because

(a) it is about God.

(b) it has a proportioned, Christian view of life.

It is a dramatic masterpiece because it treats the *whole* of one single theme with admirable tidiness and unity.

Its relation to, and contrast with, *Family Reunion* is no doubt deliberate, and significant; but even more significant as evidence of Eliot's own growth.

The change of genre from tragedy to comedy was necessary, is part of this growth, and will enable Eliot to write tragedy uninhibited.

Whereas *Murder* and *Family Reunion* ranged all Eliot's hearers or readers together as partly understanding, less or more; this play makes an absolute division between the non-Christians, to whom it must remain completely obscure, and the Christians, to whom every word of it should be entirely lucid. (That in practice this will not be so is merely an accident of contemporary Christian education and is no criticism of Eliot.)

Inevitably—since the theme is worked out *wholly*—the play has a great deal to say about the function of the Church and its relation to God. Here

it is that many Christians will fall down by thinking it says things they would like it to say but which it does not say.

You will gather from all this that the characters are *all* real people (this is implied, of course, in a Christian view of life). Though a few Eliotean turns of style may need to be expunged, such Eliotean *personal experience* as remains is rightly there, as required by true proportion.

MARLOWE'S HERESY

(*The first of two articles*)

By ENID WELSFORD

CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE is an enigmatic figure and the biographical researches of Professor Boas and others have served to deepen rather than elucidate the mystery which surrounds him. Was he an orthodox Protestant acting as secret agent for the government, or were the Cambridge authorities right in suspecting him of Papist sympathies? To what extent were later charges of heresy and disaffection justified? Why did this audacious young dramatist who was "able to shewe more sound reasons for Atheism than any devine in Englande" produce an edifying Christian morality play? It is understandable that a member of Sir Walter Raleigh's coterie should use the figures of the Conqueror and the Magician to embody the progressive and rebellious spirit of humanism, but why did he choose to send his bloodthirsty barbarian to Heaven and his humanistic scholar to Hell? It is with questions such as these in mind that one turns to the study of *Tamburlaine* and *Dr Faustus* and it is hard to escape the conclusion that the earlier play at least is meant to be a challenge to orthodoxy.

Tamburlaine was probably written about 1587. It is a chronicle play in two parts which keeps pretty closely to its historical source and describes the successful campaigns of a Scythian bandit whose biography is unpleasantly similar to that of a more recent military adventurer. In Part I, Tamburlaine, who starts life as an outlawed shepherd, is encouraged by oracular prophecies to embark upon a career of conquest. He captures, woos and wins the heart of the Egyptian Princess Zenocrate and vows to marry her as soon as he is in a position to make her Empress of all Asia. This he does after a series of victories accompanied by the most appalling cruelty. In Part II, Tamburlaine's triumphs continue, though there are signs that his fortunes are beginning to wane. His atrocities increase in frightfulness but evoke more criticism. His adored wife dies, one of his sons turns pacifist and is promptly put to death. The son of the Turkish Emperor Bajazeth escapes and renews the war against his dead father's enemy. Tamburlaine puts him to flight, but before he can follow up his victory is smitten by mortal sickness and dies after bequeathing his empire to his eldest son.

This barbaric tale would seem to be more adapted to Elizabethan than to modern taste, but Marlowe by sheer force of poetry extorts admiration for his hero,

> "Of stature tall, and straightly fashioned,
> Like his desire lift upward and divine . . . . .
> Pale of complexion, wrought in him with passion,
> Thirsting with sovereignty and love of arms."

Many critics indeed are so hypnotized by Tamburlaine's lovely meditations on knowledge and beauty that they forget the slaughtered virgins, the burning cities and are naïvely disconcerted when their "divinely strong and eager-hearted poet" asserts that the quest "after knowledge infinite" reaches a final and satisfactory conclusion in

> "That topmost bliss and sole felicity,
> The sweet fruition of an earthly crown."

"Scythian bathos" says Mr Havelock-Ellis, dismissing as irrelevant a remark which really affords a clue to the meaning of the play.

The quest for an "earthly crown," which distresses Tamburlaine's modern admirers, is a suitable symbol for that rejection of ascetic other-worldliness which was characteristic of the Renaissance.

> "A god is not so glorious as a king.
> I think the pleasure they enjoy in Heaven,
> Cannot compare with kingly joys in earth."

Here, obviously, is a gesture of defiance against Christian theologians who preached the vanity of worldly ambition.

The atrocities also served Marlowe's iconoclastic purposes. Forgiveness and humility are fundamental Christian virtues, but Tamburlaine is implacable, proud, and bent upon practical disproof of the tenet that "He who loveth his life shall lose it." The man who seeks divine honours by means of a long career of murder is the precise opposite of the God who stoops to become man in order that he may serve the souls even of his enemies. There seems little to support the suggestion that Marlowe's quarrel was with Christians rather than with Christianity. No doubt he was disgusted with the hypocrisy of the orthodox, and enjoyed underlining the Machiavellian character of their actual, as distinct from their professed, behaviour; but it does not follow that the consistent Christian meets with his approval. On the contrary, if Tamburlaine is in the right, the Christian ethical system is in the wrong, and Marlowe represents his hero as conquering both Christians and Mohammedans as the divinely-appointed agent of a different and superior religion.

> "TAMB. For fates and oracles of Heaven have sworn
> To royalise the deeds of Tamburlaine,
> And make them blest that share in his attempts . . . . .
> Villains! These terrors and these tyrannies
> (If tyrannies war's justice ye repute,)
> I execute, enjoined me from above,
> To scourge the pride of such as Heaven abhors;

Nor am I made arch-monarch of the world,
Crowned and invested by the hand of Jove
For deeds of bounty and nobility;
But since I exercise a greater name,
The scourge of God, and terror of the world,
I must apply myself to fit those terms,
In war, in blood, in death, in cruelty,
And plague such peasants as resist in me,
The power of heaven's eternal majesty."

What kind of a god is "Jove," and why has he made Tamburlaine his chosen instrument? According to the passage quoted above, the Scythian shepherd is employed to chastise *pride*, yet who more proud than himself? Apparently the distinction between the virtuous pride of Tamburlaine and the sinful pride "of such as Heaven abhors" rests on a purely arbitrary decree of divine predestination. As one critic puts it, Marlowe has evolved "a Nietschean doctrine of the Will to Power, wherein everything that frustrates the heroic will is bad, everything that makes it irresistible is good." "Jove is a *source* of vitality and strength, he is not an *object* of desire or adoration. God is Power, God is not Love or Beauty, the attack on Christianity is open and unmistakable.

Tamburlaine is entitled "the Scourge of God," but the epithet is an ambiguous one. Is the "Scourge" wielded by or directed against the Deity? The passage already quoted—and there are many similar ones—implies that the first notion is correct; but Tamburlaine's enemies naturally take the latter view, and he himself voices both interpretations of his career with equal gusto and complacency. When Tamburlaine considers his fellow-men, he ranges himself on the side of God by claiming a superhuman mission. When he considers God he ranges himself on the side of Man, by claiming divine honours for himself as an earthly king and by refusing to acknowledge the supremacy of God. But how can Tamburlaine be at one and the same time God's Viceroy, God's opposer and God's would-be supplanter?

The use of the term "Jove" in *Tamburlaine* is no mere means of evading the blasphemy laws, but appears to be closely connected with the myth of a "war in Heaven," a myth which appears in both classical and Christian tradition but with very significant differences. Lucifer, "son of the morning," fell from Heaven through pride and egoism, and his rebellion was deservedly unsuccessful. In the classical legend of the struggle between the gods and the giants we have a somewhat similar theme of a suppressed revolt, but, behind the tale, and sometimes confused with it, is the story of a series of successful revolutions in which the older generations of Gods are superseded by younger and more vigorous descendants. This myth was very definitely in Marlowe's mind. In Part I, Act 2, Scene 6, Tamburlaine's enemies discuss his origin and seek an explanation of his "fearful pride." He is regarded as a "fiery thirster after sovereignty," as a "grievous image of ingratitude," a giant rebelling against Jupiter, and is, in fact, judged as Lucifer would be judged by an orthodox Christian. But

in the very next scene, Tamburlaine replies to Cosroe's charge of being barbarous, bloody and insatiate with an appeal to the story of Jove's successful insurrection against his father Chronos.

> "TAMB. The thirst of reign and sweetness of a crown
> That caused the eldest son of heavenly Ops,
> To thrust his doting father from his chair,
> And place himself in the empyreal Heaven,
> Moved me to manage arms against thy state.
> What better precedent than mighty Jove?"

The point is made plainer still in the episode where Tamburlaine takes vengeance on his pacifist son Calyphas:

> "Here, Jove, receive his fainting soul again;
> A form not meet to give that subject essence
> Whose matter is the flesh of Tamburlaine;
> Wherein an incorporeal spirit moves,
> Made of the mould whereof thyself consists,
> Which makes me valiant, proud, ambitious,
> Ready to levy power against thy throne,
> That I might move the turning spheres of Heaven!
> For earth and all this airy region
> Cannot contain the state of Tamburlaine."

In this passage we get the clue to most of the puzzles of the play, and an indication of the magnitude and daring of Marlowe's heresy, which proves to be nothing less than a complete transformation of the concept of God. To Dante (representative in this of Christian orthodoxy) the ultimate definition of God was "the Love that moves the sun and the stars," and the ultimate goal of human endeavour was the enjoyment of the Beatific Vision a Vision which included both God Himself and the Divinely willed Order of the Universe. But the attainment of the Beatific Vision, though it implied the closest possible union, did not imply any identification with God, the absolute distinction between the creature and the Creator being then, as always, a key position of Christian orthodoxy. But the separate individuality which enables the creature to love his Creator also enables him to hate Him, and since God is Goodness Itself, hatred of Him is evil. His adversaries are devils and the very act of rebellion is already defeat.

Marlowe's conception is the very opposite of this. To begin with the distinction between Divinity and Humanity is obliterated. Tamburlaine's "incorporeal spirit" is made of "the same mould" as Jupiter. Secondly it is this very identity which enables, nay forces, Tamburlaine to rebel. Why? Because God is not Love, but Power, Energy, Activity and Activity manifests itself by causing change, by overcoming obstacles. If, however, there are no ultimate distinctions; if God is All and yet needs adversaries; then God must in a sense be at war with Himself, and the myth of the Heavenly Rebellions can be taken as a symbol, the career of grand conquerors as a manifestation of the restless forward thrust of the Divine Life-Force. As Chronos overthrew Orcus and Zeus Chronos, why should

not Tamburlaine himself overthrow Zeus? If divinity is progressive and humanity divine, why should not Man, as the youngest of the Gods, take the Kingdom of Heaven by violence, in a sense very different from that of the Gospel. In such a context the apotheosis of humanity ceases to appear ridiculous, and the rejection of Christian ethics ceases to be reprehensible.

But "Tamburlaine the scourge of God must die," and does not this simple stubborn fact reduce all the previous "high-astounding terms" to mock heroics?

> TAMB. "What daring god torments my body thus,
> And seeks to conquer mighty Tamburlaine?
> Shall sickness prove me now to be a man
> That have been termed the terror of the world?

Is Marlowe being orthodox after all and exhibiting the punishment of human pride? Have we perhaps romanticized Tamburlaine and in our eagerness to identify Marlowe with the product of his imagination, forgotten that there are other characters in the play and that some of them censure the hero in words which are by no means uneloquent or unconvincing—often, indeed, *Part II* sounds like an *ironical* commentary on *Part I*, and the view that Tamburlaine is not a god, but a devil is given some plausibility.

Nevertheless, though Marlowe may have had occasional doubt about the value of "humanism" even before he wrote *Dr Faustus*, it is, I believe, impossible to agree with the view that Tamburlaine is meant to be regarded as a "villain-hero," whom God first used as a scourge and then punished for the crime committed in that capacity. Surely the ring of the verse, the whole of the last scene and particularly the last five lines of the play make any such view untenable.

"The daring god" who afflicts Tamburlaine is not Jove but "the monarch of the Earth," the "eyeless monster" Death, and his victory marks not the triumph but the disgrace of Heaven. Indeed the opening speech of Theridamas, Techelles, and Usumcasane suggests that they are witnessing a final term in the series of cosmic revolutions:

> "Weep, heavens, and vanish into liquid tears! . . . . . .
> For Hell and Darkness pitch their pitchy tents,
> And Death with armies of Cimmerian spirits
> Gives battle 'gainst the heart of Tamburlaine! . . . . .
> Blush, Heaven, to lose the honour of thy name! . . . . .
> To see the devils mount in angels' thrones,
> And angels dive into the pools of hell!
> And though they think their painful date is out,
> And that their power is puissant as Jove's,
> Which makes them manage arms against thy state,
> Yet make them feel the strength of Tamburlaine,
> (Thy instrument and note of majesty,)
> Is greater far than they can thus subdue:
> For if he die thy glory is disgraced;
> Earth droops and says that hell in Heaven is placed."

The verse echoing of Tamburlaine's earlier speech is surely deliberate. As Jove rose against Saturn, as Tamburlaine rose against Jove, so now Cimmerian Spirits rise against Tamburlaine. But the cases are not parallel. Saturn, Jove, Tamburlaine are all made in the same divine mould, are all moments in the forward march of divine life, but the victory of Death so far from marking another stage of progress, confronts all existence, all progress with an Everlasting No. It is noticeable that at this point Christian predominates over classical imagery, and the warfare becomes a warfare between Good and Evil, Heaven and Hell, Angels and Devils, Life and Death.

> "Then let some God oppose his holy power
> Against the Wrath and tyranny of Death,
> That his tear-thirsty and unquenched hate
> May be upon himself reverberate!"

Are we to suppose that this appeal is successful? There are suggestions that it may be. His last victorious appearance on the battle-field works something like a conversion in Tamburlaine. Futile rebellion is replaced by a dignified submission to necessity, a submission, however, which is far from signifying defeat. Tamburlaine has changed his mind about his approaching physical death, which he now regards as a promotion rather than a disaster. His son is crowned, and he sees his spirit surviving in his descendants and in them continuing its career of earthly conquest. As Jove succeeds to Saturn, Amyras succeeds to Tamburlaine . . . the river of life flows on. But Tamburlaine's spirit is not only to survive in his sons, but also to continue a superior personal life elsewhere.

> "In vain I strive and rail against those powers,
> That mean to invest me in a higher throne,
> As much too high for this disdainful earth."

But if Marlowe hints at the possibility of personal immortality for his hero, he is very far indeed from giving the orthodox Christian version of the next life. There is no suggestion that Tamburlaine is to be judged by God, or made to conform to the order of the universe; on the contrary, Heaven itself is to be judged by its success in fulfilling the individualistic ambitions of Tamburlaine.

> "For if he die thy glory is disgraced;
> Earth droops and says that hell in Heaven is placed."

Tamburlaine, then, is a magnificent confession of faith in humanism, but humanism is a tragic creed. Marlowe does indeed hint that Tamburlaine may have conquered death, but he also leaves open the possibility that death has conquered Tamburlaine. Moreover, the hero's victory even if real is remote. Close at hand is the sick, helpless body of the once mighty conqueror "a woeful change, my lord, that daunts our thoughts." The issue is undecided, but the inconclusive verdict is not a sign of mental confusion. The wisest of men knew that he knew nothing and Marlowe was too true a poet to underestimate the mystery of death.

NEW DEVELOPMENT

The Rev. Cyril J. Thomas, writing in *The Methodist Recorder*, says: "We propose to bring together all the existing organizations concerned with drama. That means, in particular, that we shall work closely with the Youth Department . . . with the Epworth Press, who publish a large selection of religious plays, and with the Mission House as regards their missionary plays. The Drama Committee, be it said, has no intention of publishing plays itself.

"We intend to maintain a close liaison with the Religious Drama Society, an interdenominational body which has done a great deal during the last twenty years to raise the standard of religious drama. I serve on the executive committee of that society, and shall act as the link between it and the Drama Committee. We shall work, too, with the British Drama League, the central body for all amateur and professional drama groups in the country. We have no intention, that is, of being denominational. There is no such thing as 'Methodist' drama—only 'religious drama'."

NEWS OF THE OTHERS

STAR TURN ONE

London.

The Fortune Theatre, taken by the C.M.S. from December 13th-17th, 1949, was filled for every performance of Pamela Keily's production of Joyce Biddell's play, *The Gates of Hell*, reviewed (when at Sheffield) in our last issue. The production showed clearly the very great power of this medium as an evangelistic tool, and the *Daily Mirror's* criticism "first-class entertainment and unbelievably well acted by amateurs" shows that this is not only the view of a small clique. We hope the success of the venture will encourage similar undertakings, and a wider appreciation of the value of religious drama. We recognize once again the debt this Society owes to Miss Keily's devotion and to the infectious power of her inspiration.

STAR TURN TWO

Oxford.

A performance of the York Nativity Play was given in St Columba's Church during Christmas Week by permission of the Rev. W. G. Bailey. The cast was composed of members of the congregation, among them American, Dutch, and South African undergraduates, as well as English. The play was most imaginatively and sympathetically produced by Colonel Ronald Grant. The timing and lighting were perfect, and the simple power of the Medieval play was admirably brought out.

It was performed on three stages, excellently adapted to the simple but attractive building. The acting itself was dignified; the carols were given

by a quartette from the Oxford Operatic Society. As the costumes were contributed by both Pusey House and Campion Hall it was a really co-operative effort on the part of the churches.

STAR TURN THREE

Belfast. *The Church of Ireland Gazette* reports:

"The Prayer Book Pageant, presented in St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast by the Religious Drama Society, has been a great success. It was a production which combined great beauty of colour, movement, speech and music with a reverence which made it all culminate naturally in an act of worship.

"The players received Holy Communion in the Cathedral on Monday morning as a fitting preparation for their performances during the week.

"Very large audiences were present each evening. There must have been 1,000 each time. As all the available seating accommodation had been allotted for the performances, as originally intended during the week 21st—26th November, additional performances were given on Saturday afternoon and on Monday and Tuesday, 28th and 29th.

"We were all caught by the spirit of the pageant into a meditation upon the Providential guidance of our church through many and great dangers and to thankfulness for our priceless heritage in the Book of Common Prayer.

"Mr Mitchell and the Religious Drama Society have been triumphantly successful in providing a worthy commemoration of the 400th anniversary of the Book of Common Prayer. They have recalled history, and they have made history, for nothing quite of this kind has been seen in any of our Cathedrals in Ireland before. It is to be hoped, now that the experiment has been tried and proved successful, that Church-people elsewhere may undertake the production of this pageant."

In this simple account is concealed the story of an immense effort and of great talent devoted to the glory of God. We hope to publish a full report of the growth of the Belfast Society in our next issue.

HAVE YOU BOOKED YOUR PLACE AT THE CHICHESTER SCHOOL? If not, see p. 22.

ALL THE REST

Langton Matravers.

For four years the St George's Players of Langton Matravers Parish Church have specialized in the Medieval Play. They started in 1946 with The York Nativity which was followed by *The Maid Mary*. A generous review of their third play, *Mary the Mother*, in the *Church Times* led to an invitation to take this play on tour in 1949-1950 in aid of the Bishop's Appeal.

The chief improvement in the play this year is the addition of special lighting. This was designed and completed before it was discovered that Martin Browne has advocated in the Preface to his text exactly the type of lighting that had been made. This is three sets of floods worked through three dimmers—and the use of Straw No. 3 Gelatine.

Eight hundred watts are used in all—which is not beyond the capacity of a 5 amp. point. This simple arrangement can be taken to any church and quickly put up with the lights fixed to the pillars by means of leather straps.

In one point we go beyond Martin Browne's suggestions. We always have the Nazareth scene in the South Aisle (East End) and the Elizabeth scene in the North. The South Aisle platform later serves for the Shepherds, and the appearance of the Angel to the Kings, the North Aisle for Herod. This leaves the Chancel free for the Annunciation, the Stable, the Adoration of the Shepherds and Kings, and the Purification.

People have been struck by the pace and movement of the play. (From Simeon's entry candles are used and the play ends with a Candlemass Procession.)

Three performances at separate dates at Langton Matravers covered the expenses of the play. Costumes are all made locally.

After the performance at Salisbury, Miss Evelyn Hart, Drama Adviser to the Diocese, wrote:

"I am still hearing the impressions of many people who saw it. I have been most interested to note its appeal to very different types—the sophisticated and the simple—and all found it gripping. It struck me that it is impossible to watch this play as an outsider. You are drawn into it willy nilly."

Sydney, Australia. The Hon Camilla Wedgwood writes:

"I have just been for a week to an S.C.M. conference—a national one for all Australia—with over 500 students. I was asked to act as a Study Circle leader, and to give 'tutorials' on problems of culture-contact (a serious subject here with all the Asiatic cultures on our doorstep), and finally to put on a play-reading. I tell you this because of the, to me, surprising effect of the play-reading. I decided to put on *The House by the Stable* and *Grab and Grace*. Frightful temerity, I know, but it seemed to me about time that Charles Williams should be known over here among Christians, and also that the use of laughter in religious drama should be better apprehended. Anyhow we did it: acted it script in hand: and the thing was a terrific success. But the thing which rather staggered me was the number of *students* (not only older people) who told me afterwards what a tremendous lot the plays had meant to them. Evangelization through drama with a vengeance—if one can do *that* with inexperienced youngsters, reading their parts, with the absolute minimum of properties—well."

Perth. The Provost of St Ninian's Cathedral writes:

"*Christmas in the Market Place* will make Christmas, 1949, stand out in our memories, I am sure. There is no doubt that it was a success in the deepest meaning of the word. The audience showed by its stillness and very obvious interest that the message and meaning of the beautiful theme in its lovely and simple setting brought the fact of God's wondrous act for our Redemption as a living truth into all our hearts. It is impossible adequately to express our gratitude to those who gave the Play for us. It meant a vast amount of work and preparation for people who were already busy. The Players themselves did everything, and asked us for nothing, and as a climax they even thanked me for letting them do it! Perhaps to me what made it all especially so beautiful was to know that the Players had joined with us all in the Midnight Eucharist, and that their Play was indeed a carrying of the Christ into the lives of men and women. As I say, we cannot thank them enough, but I know they will be delighted to know how much their work was appreciated, and how the Play helped us to realize more and more the meaning of Christmas."

Southampton, Wayfarers.

The Wayfarers' Dramatic Society holds a high place in Southampton's amateur theatre world. Their current Avenue Hall production, Shaw's *Androcles and the Lion*, does nothing to tarnish their good reputation.

But in me at least the production evokes nothing of the excitement I felt when they presented Obey's *Noah* or Thornton Wilder's *Our Town*. These were further

from one's normal theatre experience than this play by Shaw, which almost any society might have chosen.

However, the Wayfarers' presentation is as meticulous as before, and producer Cicely Deverill marshals her large cast with effect and precision.

A.B.

Reading. Trinity Congregational Church.

On Monday evening, November 21st, 1949, the Trinity Religious Drama Group gave a performance of *The Dinner Party*, a one-act play by Sheila L. Smith, at Trinity Congregational Church, Reading. It was part of a musical and dramatic evening arranged in aid of the church's branch of the London Missionary Society and *The Dinner Party* is a most suitable play for such a purpose.

Bristol. The Guild of Cathedral Players. The secretary writes:

"As you know this Guild was producing *Pilgrim's Progress* as dramatized by Rodney Bennett during the last week of October. We had been finding the production difficult; towards the week itself we became a little more confident, but the knowledge that so many of those who would come would have an intimate knowledge of the book made us cautious in our estimation of how it would be received. Our doubts were completely dispelled by the crowds who attended and by the numerous appreciations that have been sent to us or to the Dean and Chapter. In place of a fresh production next Easter, they have asked that *Pilgrim's Progress* be repeated, in Passion Week."

The secretary enclosed enthusiastic notices by local critics.

Reading.

St Joseph's Convent, Broadoak, presented *Pilgrim's Progress*, by John Bunyan, adapted by Rodney Bennett, in the School Hall, on Tuesday, December 13th, and Wednesday, December 14th.

Basingstoke.

The Stable Manger, a Nativity Play by Jessie Powell, performed by members of the Parish of Basingstoke in the Daughter Church, All Saints', on January 15th, 17th, 20th, and 21st.

A large audience, of all denominations, and from a distance as well as from Basingstoke, filled all the seats from which a proper view could be obtained at each of the four performances. There was a very definite atmosphere of worship, and a number of people who are untouched by the ordinary services of the Church went away resolved, at least for the moment, to think things out again.

In some ways the play is more adapted for the instructed and thinking few than for a general audience of this kind: the device of making an actor represent a type rather than a PERSONA, and so perhaps, for instance, appear in successive scenes as a Priest and then a shepherd, not from shortage of performers but in order to shew how types of character persist, was not readily got hold of by some of the audience; and indeed there were some of the cast who felt it unnatural and strained. Religious Drama combines the effects of exhortation and teaching, and so use of the striking, and even of shock is necessary; but surely anything savouring even faintly of the silly to the interested enquirer is strictly to be avoided; and that was a comment, heard more than once after the play, on this artifice of making one actor or actress, intentionally recognizable as the same, take different parts in different scenes.

The whole production was of a very high order for amateurs: enunciation and acting, staging and planning, lighting, costumes, all these combined to make a really impressive and moving occasion. The extremely well-chosen music, largely Bach and Corelli, lost something, perhaps, through coming from a radio-gramophone instead of from live performers, but for the same reason it gained enormously in quality of performance and accuracy of timing. The chorus-speaking, not an easy thing to make convincing, was well-drilled yet with a pleasant freedom of modulation.

One of the most encouraging things to those who knew anything of the growth of the production and the work behind the scenes, was the enormous amount of cheerful voluntary labour and generosity shewn by everyone connected, however remotely, with the production; the result was a real Christian team-spirit, and a real piece of work for God.

Thame. The Fellowship Players.

The Fellowship Players repeated their open-air Christmas Pageant in Thame market place on December 15th. It went much better than last year—the loud-speakers were said to be audible at the railway station (over half-a-mile away), and the lighting and audience control (by means of hurdles) were much better, seats were also provided. The chief defect was a bitter cold wind which kept many people away, but we were lucky in a clear dry night between two teeming wet ones. We were much grander with control vans, and a telephone thence to back stage. Three producers again took part, their teams mingling for crowd scenes. Ivy the lamb provided a little light relief (before and after her perfect stage performance), the donkey also went for a walk round the town just before he was wanted, but with great presence of mind, one of the Kings' ponies was borrowed for Mary to ride.

We ended with a gathering of the Church through the years, with people in costumes of all periods and countries.

The general production again proved this a possible method, open to more people and in some ways stronger than an indoor nativity play, though, of course, the necessity for miming to loudspeakers does limit what can be produced. Thus we cannot yet imagine how we shall produce the Passion Play (on a smaller scale and a smaller mobile stage to tour the villages) which has already been suggested for 1951.

GWEN LAVERS
DOROTHY M. LEVERKUS

Putney. *The Beginning of the Way,* by Henzie Raeburn.

This was the first time the Church Dramatic Guild had attempted a "straight" play and there was a new technique to be studied. The skill and patience of Miss Turner (who came to our help at a few hours' notice after we had been tragically deprived of our first producer), combined with the humility and keenness of the actors, resulted in a very sincere and moving performance.

From the Producer downwards all concerned looked on the play as an important branch of Church work and cheerfully bore the discipline, fatigue and cold that it entailed.

Chester-le-Street.

Chester-le-Street Deanery Youth Council produced *Then Will She Return,* a religious play by Lesbia Scott, on October 7th and 8th, 1949, at 7.15 p.m. in the Little Theatre, Gateshead.

Newmarket, St Mary's Players. A correspondent writes:

"The twelfth century church was the scene of the Nativity Play, *Mary the Mother,* an adaptation by Martin Browne from the Ludus Coventriae, fifteenth century. The Players presented it on 5th and 6th January, and on each evening before a crowded congregation. The charm and sincerity of the play shone forth in the very simplicity of the production.

A stage was raised as a continuation of the Chancel floor and the surface of the stage exactly matched the stone work of the Sanctuary and the pillars of the Church.

But the whole of the Church was used, the aisles became the highways, and how very real the journeyings of Mary and Joseph, of the Shepherds and the Kings became as they passed on their various ways. What a feast of colour there was in the costumes of the fifteenth century.

The stage became in turn the Council Chamber of Heaven, the Home of Mary, then of Zacharias and finally the stable in Bethlehem, and so the play moved on towards its final scene—Candlemas. Then the play passed into the Chancel. The altar candles were lit and players and congregation alike were taking part in a service as Mary and Joseph with their simple offering of doves stood before Simeon.

Then, last of all, the Candlemas procession as each character with lighted candle passed through the aisles, a final prayer and all was finished as the congregation streamed out on their homeward way and yet not finished for the loveliness of the play and the dignity and beauty of its words will remain in the hearts of many as they go about their daily work.

Newcastle-on-Tyne. Dorothy Jacob writes:—

As this is the first time we have reported our activities I hope the following account will interest you.

At the beginning of January the St George's Players presented Henri Gheon's *Christmas in the Market Place.* The small cast of five made it more than ever a team effort and it was acted throughout with great sincerity. The costumes were simple but extremely effective and a small group of singers provided the incidental music but as this was essentially a parish effort as part of the great celebration of Christmas (the audience being as much part of the show as the actors) everybody joined in the opening carol, "In Dulci Jubilo," and "God rest you merry, Gentlemen" at the close of the play.

London.

The Church of St Thomas, Regent Street, W.1., presented *Seed of Adam,* a Nativity Play by Charles Williams, on 9th to 15th January, 1950.

Leigh-on-Sea. Rev. Alec Banks writes:

"I thought you might like to know something about the St Clement's Players of Leigh-on-Sea, as we have not yet sent you any informatioin about our activities.

"We are a Dramatic Society drawn from the ranks of the worshippers at St Clement's Church, and perform plays both secular and religious, in the Church Hall or in the Church according to the type of play.

"Last Christmas we presented in Church *The First Good Joy,* by Isabel Rendel. As the chancel of St Clement's is very narrow, and as carved pew ends obstruct the view from the nave, if we want to present our plays in Church we move over to the Lady Chapel which is fairly modern and more spacious than the chancel, and it provides an ideal setting for religious drama, and we can seat well over a hundred people at each presentation. With *The First Good Joy,* the only 'props' we used were two stools, a fire for the shepherds' scene, and the manger. We were able to introduce a little variety into the exits and entrances (there being only one entrance to the sanctuary from the sides) by having the shepherds going off to Bethlehem down the aisle, and in the last scene both they and the Magi making their entrance up the aisle to the sanctuary. This Play was rather shorter than our previous efforts (though we did have organ music in between the scenes) and perhaps simpler in story and language, but the sincere and reverent treatment of it by the Players made a great impression on the audience.

"Previous presentations of the St Clement's Players on the religious drama side include *Beginning of the Way, In Three Days,* and three short plays of Vera Arlett."

Liverpool.

The Bishop's Players presented *Go Down Moses,* by Philip Lamb, at Wigan Little Theatre, Wigan, David Lewis Theatre, Liverpool, Holt High School, Liverpool, Wade Deacon Grammar School, Widnes, Holy Trinity School Hall, Southport, St Andrew's Church Hall, Clubmoor, during November and December 1949.

Bickley and Widmore.

Nativity, by Nora Ratcliff, was presented by the Bickley and Widmore Guild of Players in the Church Hall, Bickley, from December 16th to December 18th, and produced by A. Strudwick, Esq.

This is the Silver Jubilee of the Guild, of which Mr Strudwick has been producer since its inception.

Extract from local press: ". . . It is a play worth performing, and the company did it justice in a beautiful production in which colour, lighting, music and some fine acting were blended into an artistic and satisfying whole. This group of players are celebrating their twenty-fifth anniversary. They deserve the congratulations and thanks of all the district who believe that religious drama is worth while."

Coventry.

Bremond College for Girls presented *This the Way*, a choral mime by Mrs. J. C. Marash. A friend of Coventry Cathedral writes:

". . . How much we enjoyed and appreciated the very beautiful choral speaking and mime in the Cathedral on Saturday. I thought the first act particularly was most original and the rendering of the psalms was full of meaning. 'Abraham' was very sensitive and so were all the others. Thank you all very much for the inspiration that shone through everything."

Calcutta. Rev. B. Harvey, Bishop's College, writes:

"Your letter of permission to perform *In the Day of Judgement*, and still more your good wishes have deserved an answer long ago, or at least since the 10th September, the day of performance.

"It is rather hard for the producer to report on the play he has attempted. But I shall only give you one point about my reaction to it, which was that it went off infinitely better than my wildest dreams. Of others' comments, which are more reliable: The staff here said it was the best production they had seen in B.C.C., and one did describe it as 'first-class,' and 'the sort of thing that should be publicly put on in Calcutta, and not merely be the private invitation performance within the College compound.' This latter wish has had no chance of fulfilment, because the College has a busy enough time before it (having reopened yesterday).

"These same Staff, when they first read over the play, were doubtful about it, because they thought it too Western and too sophisticated. I then showed it to the group of students who were to perform whatever play we chose, and they were quite unstinted in their attraction to it. It was because of their reaction that I decided to take the plunge, and in spite of the staff's doubts.

"The company included the following: Bonner, born in Ceylon, domiciled in India, a man in his 40's; Gardiner, middle-aged Anglo-Indian widower from Bombay; Hooper, Anglo-Burmese in his 20's; Cranmer, Singalese (of Tamil descent), 20's; Lord Williams, Anglo-Indian, ex-Army and first-class boxer (heavy-weight!) late 20's, from Calcutta; Feckenham, Ceylon, late 20's; Cole, Travancore, circa 30; Guards (2), (1) Anglo-Burmese, 20's, (2) Indian from Singapore (ex-Army), circa 30; Friars (2), (1) one time farmer from the Punjab, middle-aged, married, (2) Dornakal (S. India), late 20's; Crowd, Ladies: one Bengali, one Kasi (from Assam), in 20's; Gentlemen: 2 married Bengalis, 1 from Delhi, early 20's, 1 from Assam, 30's; Stage managers and curtain pullers, Ceylon and Allahabad; Producer, Irish!

Freemantle. Christchurch Religious Drama Society. The director writes:

"When I heard that 'The Christ Church Freemantle Religious Drama Society' had set their hearts to produce *Tobias and the Angel*, I felt they had taken on a big thing. Their ability, determination, and hard work was fully repaid, the production was carried through in a wonderful way, and the acting was of a high standard.

The Sunday before the presentation of the play, the whole cast attended the early service to make their Corporate Communion.

"Tobias' swim in the Tigris, and the defeat of Asmoday by the Archange Raphael, will be remembered by all who saw the play. Not a member of the cas was over eighteen years of age, and there were some difficult parts to act; it wa done perfectly, and another triumph gained for Dramatic Art as we have it i Freemantle."

Croydon.

The Croydon Players (founded 1924 by Barry Robinson) presented *Th Hopeful Travellers*, a Flemish play in three acts by André Obey and G. M Martens, at the Civic Hall, Croydon, on Monday, November 14th, and Tuesday November 15th. Originally produced in Paris in February 1945 under the titl *Les Gueux au Paridis*. Translated by Lady Iris Capell. Music composed b Claude Arrieu. Although broadcast by the B.B.C. early this year, *The Hopefu Travellers* has had, so far, no professional production in this country.

Cambridge.

Religious Drama took a step forward in Cambridge on November 16th when fine performance of *The Apostle Play* was given in the Guildhall. The occasion was a big Missionary Sale, and the representatives of Religious Drama were quick to seize the opportunity offered. Though the four actors came from differen places, and had never acted together before, their unity, and interpretation of thi beautiful but difficult play made a deep impression. The clever use of lighting was noteworthy for its power to transform a bare wall and curtainless platform, so that the actors were greatly helped in the creation of their parts. T.C.

R. D. S. NEWS

SUMMER SCHOOL

Bishop Otter College, Chichester. July 22nd to 31st, 1950.

Many who came to our School at Bishop Otter two years ago will I am sure be delighted that we are returning to this beautiful college in July. Having proved at York last summer the value of a nine day School as against one week, we are repeating this, and so I hope our readers will make their plans accordingly.

We have been wonderfully fortunate in securing the following as resident staff:

Miss Eileen Thorndike. Well known on the London stage as producer and actress. Before the war she formed and ran the Embassy School of Acting. She produced the Canterbury Festival Plays for the first three years of that Festival.

Mr Willard Stoker. Has been a Director of the Birmingham Repertory Theatre, Oxford Playhouse, Scottish National Players, also produced on the London stage and for Arts Council tours.

Miss Stella Mary Pearce. Designer for *Murder in the Cathedral, The Family Reunion, This Way to the Tomb*, etc.

I myself will be on the teaching staff this year. We have therefore invited Mrs Pattison Muir (Audrey Machin) to be hostess in my place, and Miss Jessie Powell is again the secretary.

Whereas Miss Thorndike, Mr Stoker and myself will be producing differing types of plays, Miss Pearce will be designing scenery and costumes, and so we hope that many students with an interest in that aspect of the theatre will make a point of attending this School.

Mr Christopher le Fleming, now so well loved by our Schools, will again be with us part of the time.

The Chaplains will be the Rev. John Mortimer, Films Dept. S.P.C.K. House, and the Rev. A. E. Newman of the Methodist Church, from Buckley, Chester.

Bearing in mind Mr F. N. Davey's article in the last number of *Christian Drama*, we are hoping to have two theologians with us for lectures and discussions. Their names and those of other lecturers will be announced later.

Last and by no means least, Mr Martin Browne will be with us, and we hope to study and discuss T. S. Eliot's *The Cocktail Party*. We are looking forward to seeing his production of this play on the London stage in the summer when it returns from Broadway, New York.

We deeply regret that the early date will make it impossible for many teachers to come, though in some cases permission may be granted. Every effort was made to book the School at a later date, but without success. We therefore look to our members and friends, ESPECIALLY MEN! who are not in the teaching profession, to give extra support to this School and to make it known as widely as possible.

Application Forms are now obtainable from the office. PLEASE BOOK NOW !

CARINA ROBINS, *Schools' Organizer.*

News from the Travelling Adviser.

Short Courses of training in religious drama are the chief item of news at the moment.

We have been responsible for the programme and tutoring of these in the Woolwich Deanery, at Cambridge, in the Isle of Wight, and two week-ends at Gillingham in Kent for the Medway Towns. Pamela Keily is taking a week-end in Cornwall, and Mrs Baxter in Essex, both in February.

Mr Lawrence Hayes and I are taking a week-end for the Yorkshire Y.M.C.A. at Scarborough, March 25th-26th, and another for the Harrogate Religious Drama Council, April 21st-22nd. Finally, Bournemouth is arranging a week-end, May 5th-7th.

I shall probably be giving a fuller report of my work at the Annual General Meeting.

CARINA ROBINS

Librarian's Lament.

Parcels of books are sometimes returned to the Library without bearing any note of the name of the sender, thus involving the Librarian in a good deal of time-wasting detective work. The Library Invoice should be returned with the books or, if this is impossible, the name and address of sender clearly stated.

Please attach cheques and postal-orders by clip to the *outside* of a book and do not modestly (and sometimes irrevocably) hide them in the pages.

Thanking you in anticipation.

THE LIBRARIAN.

Stocktaking.

The Library will be closed for stocktaking from *Monday, June 19th till Monday, July 3rd.* No books can be issued during that time. It will be a great help if members will kindly return all books they are not using, before June 19th.

New Plays added to the Library.

**Good Friday.* JOHN MASEFIELD, 1947. (Heinemann, 6/-). H. 1 act. 1½ hours. 7 m., 1 w., supers. Verse. (Fee: apply Royal Society of Authors.) Out of print. Two copies only in Library.

**Song of the Morning, The.* T. B. MORRIS. 1949. (Muller, 4/6.) H. 5 scenes. 1½ hours. Reader, 7 m., 8 w., Satan, Gabriel, Chorus opt., supers opt. Stylized setting between Heaven and Hell, Study of the temptations of Job, partly naturalistic prose, partly stylized verse and action; advanced. (Fee: apply publishers.)

**Terrible Meek, The.* CHARLES RANN KENNEDY. 1912. (French, New York.) HX. 1 act. 30 minutes. 2 m., 1 w. Unusual reconstruction of night of Crucifixion; dialogue in modern idiom until revelation of identity at end. (No fee.)

Teachers' Omnibus of Plays, The. E. LUCIA TURNBULL. 1949. (O.U.P. 7/6.) Contains *The Peace Egg* and *Jolly Wat.*

**Thou Bethlehem.* J. G. MARASH. Music by ERIC BALL. 1949. (French. 1/6.) H. 3 acts. 45 minutes. 18 characters, angels, supers, 3 ext. sets. The Innkeeper's small son has spiritual insight and understanding of the Nativity. Written for a school production. (Fee: £2 2s. 0d.) Previously in the Typescript Library.

**Three Wise Men, The.* H. D. C. PEPLER. Illustration by ERIC GILL. 1949. (R.D.S. 1/6.) 35-40 minutes. H. 4 scenes. 9 m., 1 w., Holy Family. For inner and outer stage.

Reference Books.

Church Vestments, their origin and development. HERBERT NORRIS. Illustrated with eight pages of photographs and with eight colour plates and numerous black and white drawings by the author. 1949. (Dent, 42/-.) The author traces the development of the vestments of the Christian Church from their origin in Roman civilization, through the centuries up to the end of the fifteenth century.

Modern English Drama. ERNEST REYNOLDS. With a foreword by Allardyce Nicoll. 1949. (Harrap. 10/6.) A survey of the theatre from 1900.

World Drama. ALLARDYCE NICOLL. 1949, (Harrap. 30/-.) 64 plates in half-tone. From Æschylus to the Present Day. In this survey of 2,500 years the growth of the drama in all its aspects is considered. The author is specially concerned to depict the changing social background against which dramatic evolution has taken place.

Plays in Typescript.

**A Pageant of St Peter, A.* A. A. BAKER. (T.S.) X. 4 scenes. 30 minutes. 9 m., Guardian Angel, supers, unseen choir. Written for and produced in St Peter's, Eaton Square, London. Simple and straightforward. Modern idiom. Suitable for dedication festival. (Fee: apply author, c/o R.D.S.)

**Without Money.* THEODORA CHADWICK. (T.S.) H. 2 scenes. 35 minutes. 4 m., 5 w., 3g. Modern morality set in a Fair Ground. (Fee: apply author, c/o R.D.S.)

*In Recommended List

New Sets.

The Stable Manger. JESSIE POWELL. (Typescript.)
The Three Wise Men. H. D. C. PEPLER.

We would like to thank the Rev. V. T. Ducker for a typescript set of *The Way of the Cross*, the Rev. R. C. Wynne for a typescript set of *The Stable Manger*, and Miss Joan Lake for a parcel of plays.

CHRISTIAN DRAMA is the quarterly magazine of the RELIGIOUS DRAMA SOCIETY. *President:* The Lord Bishop of Chichester. *Chairman of Executive:* E. Martin Browne. *Chairman of Council:* Miss Athene Seyler. *Travelling Adviser:* Miss Carina Robins. *Editor of Christian Drama:* Mrs K. M. Baxter. *Librarian:* Miss K. Bainbridge-Bell. *Secretary:* T. G. Bartholomew. All enquiries and applications for membership should be addressed to The Secretary, R.D.S., S.P.C.K. House, Northumberland Avenue, W.C. 2

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